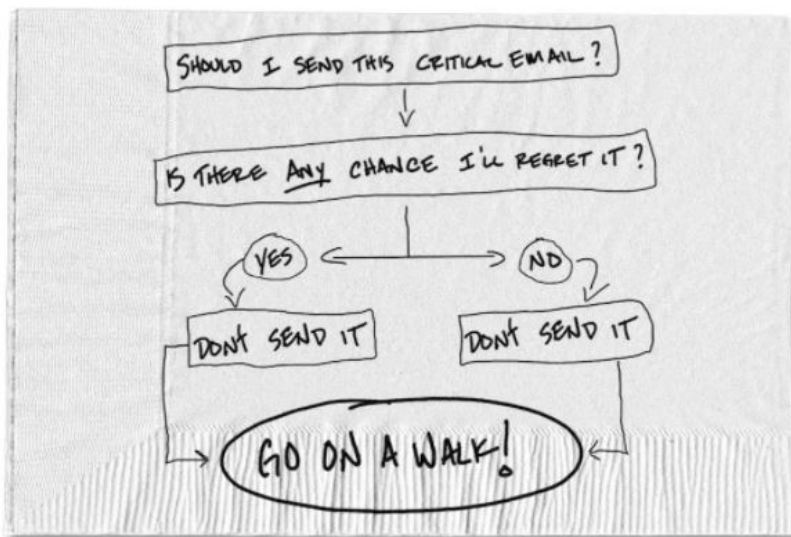


SKETCH GUY

A 4-Step Guide to Ranting Productively



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There's nothing wrong with ranting. Most people do it. I would argue that everybody needs to do it. In fact, I'd even suggest that ranting is a good thing.

But only if you do it right. If you do it wrong, the consequences can cost you your job, your friendships or even your marriage.

So learn how to rant productively. You need to practice often (and if you're like me, this won't be an issue). And you need to follow certain rules. Here are four to live by.

1) Do. Not. Send. If you find yourself having even the tiniest shadow of a doubt about whether or not you should really send that email, the answer is automatically, immediately and unequivocally no. The same goes for blog posts, social media and text messages.

If you simply have to get something out, send it to yourself. Sometimes all you really need is the satisfaction of clicking the send button. It doesn't necessarily matter who the message goes to.

2) Find a friend. If you rant in a forest and nobody hears it, is it still satisfying? Maybe not. Ranting may only feel good if someone is there to appreciate all your witty and snarky remarks. But choose your audience wisely. Instead of ranting to the person you're frustrated with (or to the whole world), rant to someone you trust.

Use this script: "I need to get something off my chest. You don't have to actually listen. Please just wait until I'm done and then agree with everything I say." By the way, if you want to rant about a co-worker, don't do it to another co-worker. Your rant friend should be deeply trusted and, if at all possible, completely detached from the subject.

3) Not in public. There are certain things we really shouldn't do in public. Ranting is one of them. I regret every time I've broken this rule. Grab your friend, go somewhere quiet and peaceful, and then go nuts. Nobody is in their best form when they're ranting. Why would you ever want to put that on display?

4) Don't rant to fix things. This is key. The rant is for you. Your rant will not change the issue or the person you are frustrated with. Save that goal for later. Think of ranting as something you do with the singular purpose of changing yourself. Get it all out. Purge. Once you've taken care of yourself, then you can start thinking about fixing someone or something else.

I know all of this is easier said than done, but that's no excuse for continuing to rant in a way that only hurts you in the end. Make a ranting buddy Rolodex, and invite the people in it to use you for ranting purposes as well. Create a fake email account to which you can send all your angry email rants. Be creative. I promise, there are ways to make this easier and much more safe over the long haul.

Is there something else that works for you? I'd love to hear your tips for productive ranting at hello@behaviorgap.com.